

nies being located within the borders of our country.

(Mar. 3, 1901, ch. 872, § 24, as added Aug. 23, 1988, Pub. L. 100-418, title V, § 5114(2), 102 Stat. 1432.)

**§ 278k. Regional Centers for the Transfer of Manufacturing Technology**

**(a) Creation and support of Centers; affiliations; merit review in determining awards; objectives**

The Secretary, through the Director and, if appropriate, through other officials, shall provide assistance for the creation and support of Regional Centers for the Transfer of Manufacturing Technology (hereafter in this chapter referred to as the “Centers”). Such centers<sup>1</sup> shall be affiliated with any United States-based nonprofit institution or organization, or group thereof, that applies for and is awarded financial assistance under this section in accordance with the description published by the Secretary in the Federal Register under subsection (c)(2) of this section. Individual awards shall be decided on the basis of merit review. The objective of the Centers is to enhance productivity and technological performance in United States manufacturing through—

- (1) the transfer of manufacturing technology and techniques developed at the Institute to Centers and, through them, to manufacturing companies throughout the United States;
- (2) the participation of individuals from industry, universities, State governments, other Federal agencies, and, when appropriate, the Institute in cooperative technology transfer activities;
- (3) efforts to make new manufacturing technology and processes usable by United States-based small- and medium-sized companies;
- (4) the active dissemination of scientific, engineering, technical, and management information about manufacturing to industrial firms, including small- and medium-sized manufacturing companies; and
- (5) the utilization, when appropriate, of the expertise and capability that exists in Federal laboratories other than the Institute.

**(b) Activities of Centers**

The activities of the Centers shall include—

- (1) the establishment of automated manufacturing systems and other advanced production technologies, based on research by the Institute, for the purpose of demonstrations and technology transfer;
- (2) the active transfer and dissemination of research findings and Center expertise to a wide range of companies and enterprises, particularly small- and medium-sized manufacturers; and
- (3) loans, on a selective, short-term basis, of items of advanced manufacturing equipment to small manufacturing firms with less than 100 employees.

**(c) Duration and amount of support; program descriptions; applications; merit review; evaluations of assistance; applicability of patent law**

(1) The Secretary may provide financial support to any Center created under subsection (a) of this section for a period not to exceed six years. The Secretary may not provide to a Center more than 50 percent of the capital and annual operating and maintenance funds required to create and maintain such Center.

(2) The Secretary shall publish in the Federal Register, within 90 days after August 23, 1988, a draft description of a program for establishing Centers, including—

- (A) a description of the program;
- (B) procedures to be followed by applicants;
- (C) criteria for determining qualified applicants;
- (D) criteria, including those listed under paragraph (4), for choosing recipients of financial assistance under this section from among the qualified applicants; and
- (E) maximum support levels expected to be available to Centers under the program in the fourth through sixth years of assistance under this section.

The Secretary shall publish a final description under this paragraph after the expiration of a 30-day comment period.

(3) Any nonprofit institution, or group thereof, or consortia of nonprofit institutions, including entities existing on August 23, 1988, may submit to the Secretary an application for financial support under this subsection, in accordance with the procedures established by the Secretary and published in the Federal Register under paragraph (2). In order to receive assistance under this section, an applicant shall provide adequate assurances that it will contribute 50 percent or more of the proposed Center’s capital and annual operating and maintenance costs for the first three years and an increasing share for each of the last three years. Each applicant shall also submit a proposal for the allocation of the legal rights associated with any invention which may result from the proposed Center’s activities.

(4) The Secretary shall subject each such application to merit review. In making a decision whether to approve such application and provide financial support under this subsection, the Secretary shall consider at a minimum (A) the merits of the application, particularly those portions of the application regarding technology transfer, training and education, and adaptation of manufacturing technologies to the needs of particular industrial sectors, (B) the quality of service to be provided, (C) geographical diversity and extent of service area, and (D) the percentage of funding and amount of in-kind commitment from other sources.

(5) Each Center which receives financial assistance under this section shall be evaluated during its third year of operation by an evaluation panel appointed by the Secretary. Each such evaluation panel shall be composed of private experts, none of whom shall be connected with the involved Center, and Federal officials. An official of the Institute shall chair the panel.

<sup>1</sup> So in original. Probably should be capitalized.

Each evaluation panel shall measure the involved Center's performance against the objectives specified in this section. The Secretary shall not provide funding for the fourth through the sixth years of such Center's operation unless the evaluation is positive. If the evaluation is positive, the Secretary may provide continued funding through the sixth year at declining levels, which are designed to ensure that the Center no longer needs financial support from the Institute by the seventh year. In no event shall funding for a Center be provided by the Department of Commerce after the sixth year of the operation of a Center.

(6) The provisions of chapter 18 of title 35 shall (to the extent not inconsistent with this section) apply to the promotion of technology from research by Centers under this section except for contracts for such specific technology extension or transfer services as may be specified by statute or by the Director.

**(d) Acceptance of funds from other Federal departments and agencies**

In addition to such sums as may be authorized and appropriated to the Secretary and Director to operate the Centers program, the Secretary and Director also may accept funds from other Federal departments and agencies for the purpose of providing Federal funds to support Centers. Any Center which is supported with funds which originally came from other Federal departments and agencies shall be selected and operated according to the provisions of this section.

(Mar. 3, 1901, ch. 872, §25, as added Aug. 23, 1988, Pub. L. 100-418, title V, §5121(a), 102 Stat. 1433; amended Feb. 14, 1992, Pub. L. 102-245, title I, §105(e), 106 Stat. 12.)

**AMENDMENTS**

1992—Subsec. (c)(6). Pub. L. 102-245, §105(e)(1), inserted before period at end “except for contracts for such specific technology extension or transfer services as may be specified by statute or by the Director”.

Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 102-245, §105(e)(2), amended subsec. (d) generally. Prior to amendment, subsec. (d) read as follows: “There are authorized to be appropriated for the purposes of carrying out this section, a combined total of not to exceed \$40,000,000 for fiscal years 1989 and 1990. Such sums shall remain available until expended.”

**ADDITIONAL RENEWAL OF FEDERAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR CENTERS**

Pub. L. 104-208, div. A, title I, §101(a) [title II], Sept. 30, 1996, 110 Stat. 3009, 3009-36, provided in part: “That notwithstanding the time limitations imposed by 15 U.S.C. 278k(c)(1) and (5) on the duration of Federal financial assistance that may be awarded by the Secretary of Commerce to Regional Centers for the [T]ransfer of Manufacturing Technology (‘Centers’), such Federal financial assistance for a Center may continue beyond six years and may be renewed for additional periods, not to exceed one year, at a rate not to exceed one-third of the Center's total annual costs, subject before any such renewal to a positive evaluation of the Center and to a finding by the Secretary of Commerce that continuation of Federal funding to the Center is in the best interest of the Regional Centers for the [T]ransfer of Manufacturing Technology Program.”

Similar provisions were contained in the following prior appropriation act:

Pub. L. 103-317, title II, Aug. 26, 1994, 108 Stat. 1741.

**PUBLICATION IN FEDERAL REGISTER**

Pub. L. 100-519, title I, §102(d), Oct. 24, 1988, 102 Stat. 2590, provided that: “The requirement of section 25(c)(2) of the Act of March 3, 1901, [15 U.S.C. 278k(c)(2)], shall be considered to have been met by the publication made by the National Bureau of Standards on July 18, 1988 (53 Fed. Reg. 27060).”

**SECTION REFERRED TO IN OTHER SECTIONS**

This section is referred to in sections 272, 278I of this title; title 10 section 2199.

**§ 278I. Assistance to State technology programs**

(a) In addition to the Centers program created under section 278k of this title, the Secretary, through the Director and, if appropriate, through other officials, shall provide technical assistance to State technology programs throughout the United States, in order to help those programs help businesses, particularly small- and medium-sized businesses, to enhance their competitiveness through the application of science and technology.

(b) Such assistance from the Institute to State technology programs shall include, but not be limited to—

(1) technical information and advice from Institute personnel;

(2) workshops and seminars for State officials interested in transferring Federal technology to businesses; and

(3) entering into cooperative agreements when authorized to do so under this chapter or any other Act.

(Mar. 3, 1901, ch. 872, §26, as added Aug. 23, 1988, Pub. L. 100-418, title V, §5121(a), 102 Stat. 1435.)

**TECHNOLOGY EXTENSION SERVICES**

Section 5121(b), (c) of Pub. L. 100-418, as amended by Pub. L. 102-245, title I, §105(d), Feb. 14, 1992, 106 Stat. 12, provided that:

“(b) **TECHNOLOGY EXTENSION SERVICES.**—(1) The Secretary shall conduct a nationwide study of current State technology extension services. The study shall include—

“(A) a thorough description of each State program, including its duration, its annual budget, and the number and types of businesses it has aided;

“(B) a description of any anticipated expansion of each State program and its associated costs;

“(C) an evaluation of the success of the services in transferring technology, modernizing manufacturing processes, and improving the productivity and profitability of businesses;

“(D) an assessment of the degree to which State services make use of Federal programs, including the Small Business Innovative Research program and the programs of the Federal Laboratory Consortium, the National Technical Information Service, the National Science Foundation, the Office of Productivity, Technology, and Innovation, and the Small Business Administration;

“(E) a survey of what additional Federal information and technical assistance the services could utilize; and

“(F) an assessment of how the services could be more effective agents for the transfer of Federal scientific and technical information, including the results and application of Federal and federally funded research.

The Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate, at the time of submission of the organization plan for the Institute under